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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU

INTRODUCING...
ZARAN
THE WEAPONS-
MASTER!



**BLOOD
ON THE
TRACKS!**

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. Since then, I have learned that my father is Dr. Fu Manchu, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my *name*."

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

DOUG MOENCH WRITER MIKE ZECK PENCILER GENE DAY INKER JOE ROSEN LETTERER GEORGE BELL COLORIST ROGER STERN EDITOR JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





"...ARMED WITH THAT WHICH MIGHT END THE PRESENT MADNESS, SHATTERING THE FALSE CROWN OF POWER WORN BY MI-6.

GOT TO HURRY, SHANG. IF I KNOW BLACK JACK, HE WON'T WAIT FOR LONG-- NOT WITH SIR DENIS IN TROUBLE.



WHAT ABOUT THIS, LEIKO? THE TAPE.

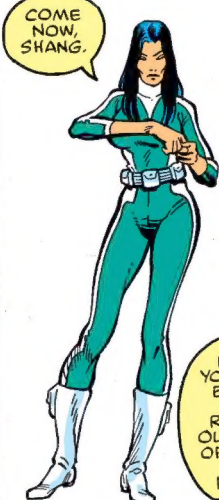
"OF SHOCKWAVE'S VOICE, PROVING THAT MI-6 HAS BEEN PLOTTING OUR ASSASSINATIONS.



GOOD QUESTION. IT'S OUR ONLY REAL WEAPON-- IF WE CAN GET IT INTO THE HANDS OF THE PRIME MINISTER-- SO IT'S GOT TO BE KEPT IN A SAFE PLACE...

...WHICH EXCLUDES THIS FLAT.

WHY?



COME NOW, SHANG.

BY NOW YOU SHOULD BE WISE TO THE RULES OF OUR "GAMES OF DECEIT AND DEATH."



BLACK JACK LEFT SHOCKWAVE WITH THE POLICE ON HIS WAY TO THE CASTLE IN SCOTLAND...

YES, BECAUSE WE COULD NOT TURN HIM OVER TO MI-6...



RIGHT-- THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE WE COULD DO.

BUT HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WAS BEFORE THE POLICE TURNED SHOCKWAVE OVER TO MI-6?

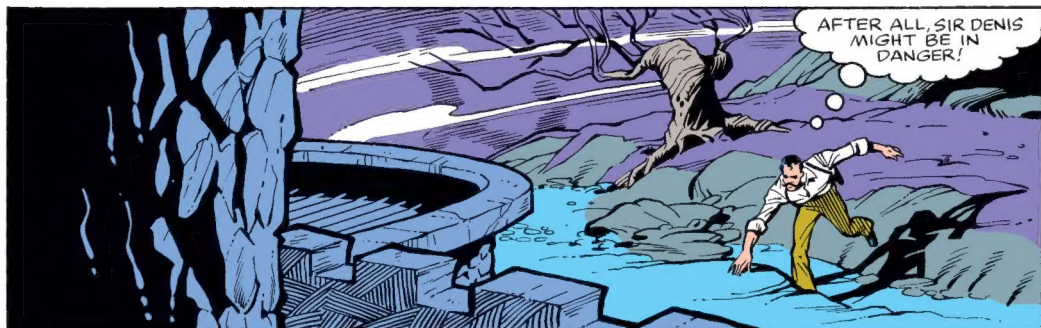
YES... I SEE. MI-6'S INFLUENCE EXTENDS EVERYWHERE IN THIS COUNTRY.



YOU'VE GOT IT. BY NOW THEY'VE PROBABLY FORCED SHOCKWAVE TO TALK, AND THE FIRST TIME THIS FLAT IS VACATED-- EVEN FOR AN HOUR--

--THERE'LL BE AN EXPERT SEARCH FOR THIS TAPE.



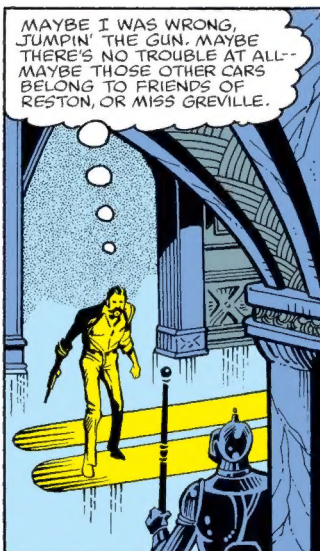


AFTER ALL, SIR DENIS MIGHT BE IN DANGER!



HMP--
DOOR'S
OPEN...

...AN'
IT'S
BLOODY
QUIET
INSIDE.

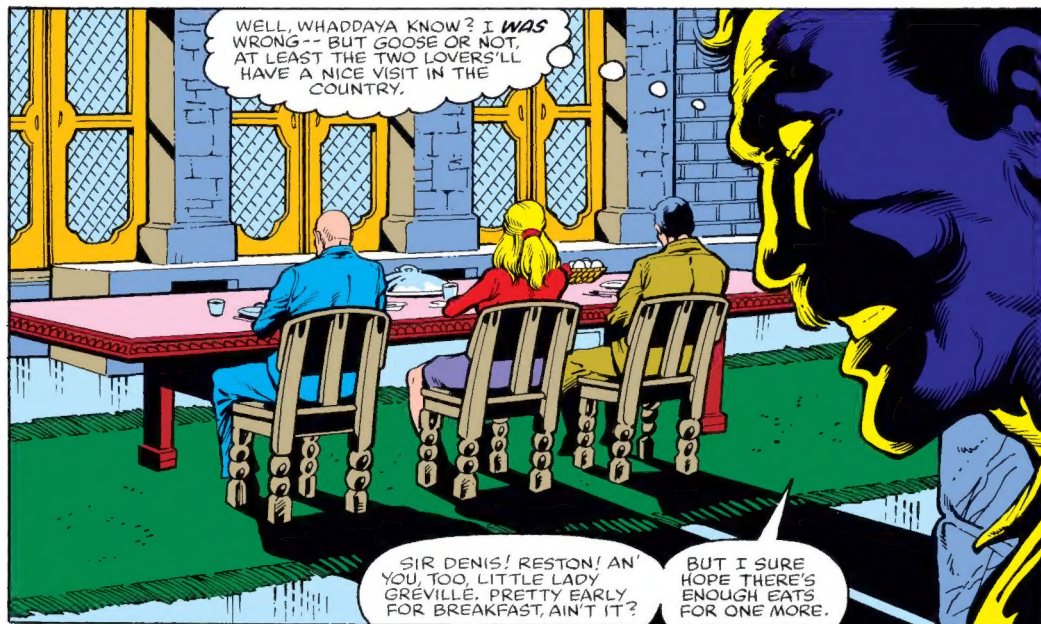


MAYBE I WAS WRONG,
JUMPIN' THE GUN. MAYBE
THERE'S NO TROUBLE AT ALL--
MAYBE THOSE OTHER CARS
BELONG TO FRIENDS OF
RESTON, OR MISS GREVILLE.



MAYBE I'VE CALLED
WU AN' THE CHINAMAN
OUT ON NOTHIN' BUT
A WILD GOOSE
CHASE.

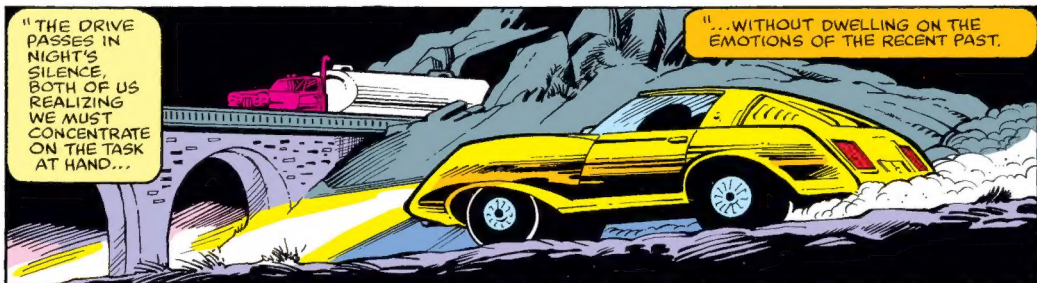
WHAT'S
IN HERE?

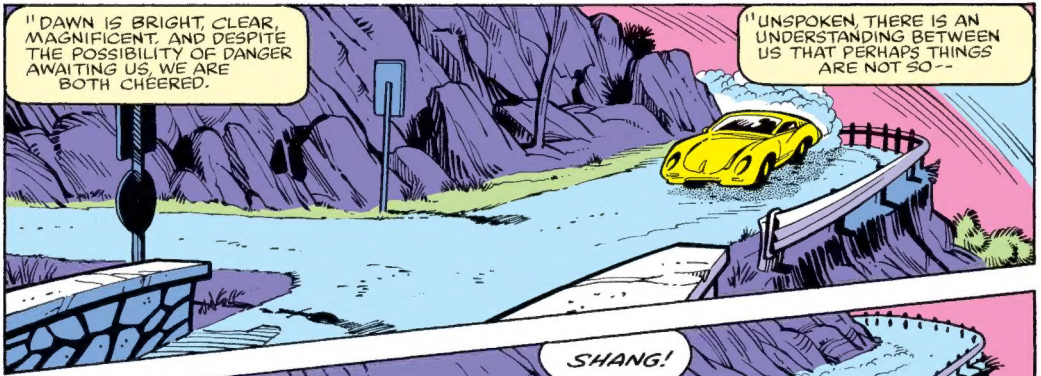


WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW? I *WAS*
WRONG-- BUT GOOSE OR NOT,
AT LEAST THE TWO LOVERS'LL
HAVE A NICE VISIT IN THE
COUNTRY.

SIR DENIS! RESTON! AN'
YOU, TOO, LITTLE LADY
GREVILLE, PRETTY EARLY
FOR BREAKFAST, AIN'T IT?

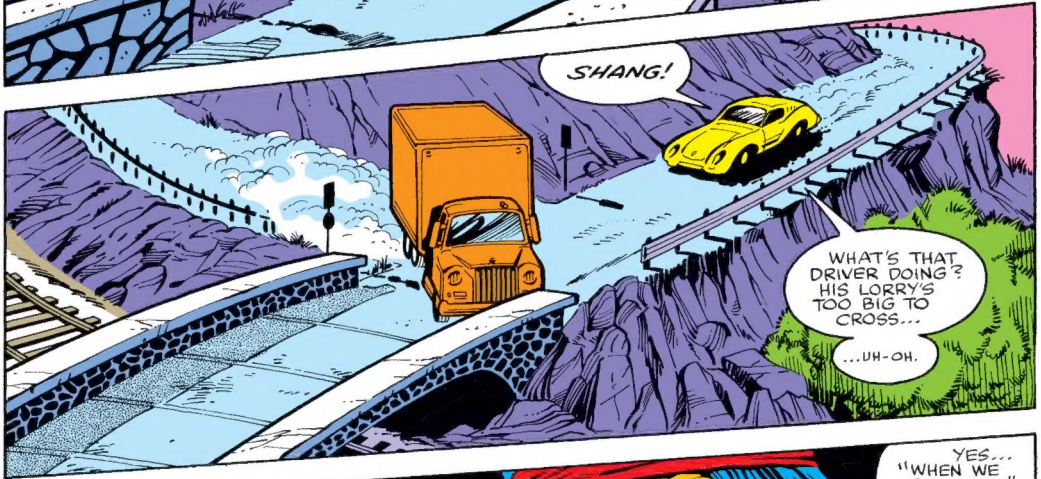
BUT I SURE
HOPE THERE'S
ENOUGH EATS
FOR ONE MORE.





"DAWN IS BRIGHT, CLEAR, MAGNIFICENT. AND DESPITE THE POSSIBILITY OF DANGER AWAITING US, WE ARE BOTH CHEERED."

"UNSPOKEN, THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US THAT PERHAPS THINGS ARE NOT SO --"



SHANG!

WHAT'S THAT DRIVER DOING? HIS LORRY'S TOO BIG TO CROSS...

...UH-OH.



UNLESS... THIS IS THAT BRIDGE WE HAVE TO CROSS...

STILL READY?

YES... "WHEN WE GET TO IT"... AND WE'RE HERE, LEIKO.

YES.



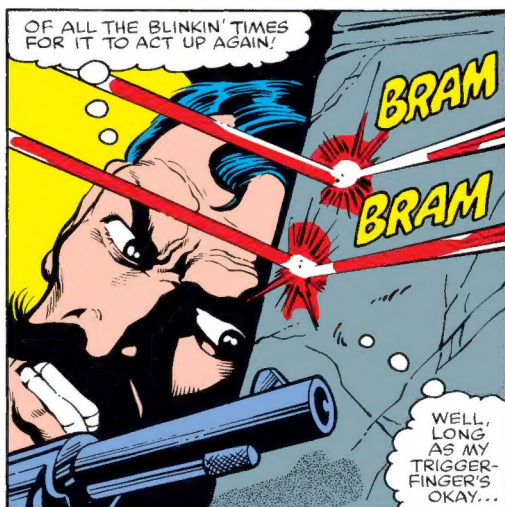
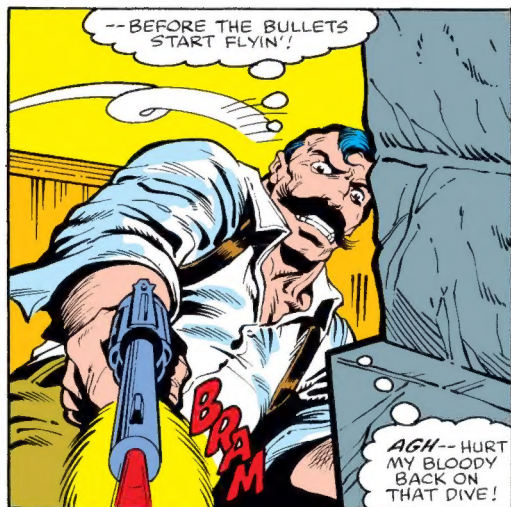
THEN LET'S SEE IF SOMETHING'S HOLDING THIS DRIVER UP...

...OR IF HE WISHES TO HOLD US UP.



BUT WHO COULD HAVE--?

UH-OH-- HOPE I DIDN'T HEAR WHAT I JUST HEARD.



"THE REAR OF THE TRUCK BURSTS OPEN AND LEIKO STABS FOR HER GUN BEFORE THEY REACH THE GROUND, BUT--



"WHO--?"



WHAT BUSINESS? WHO ARE YOU?

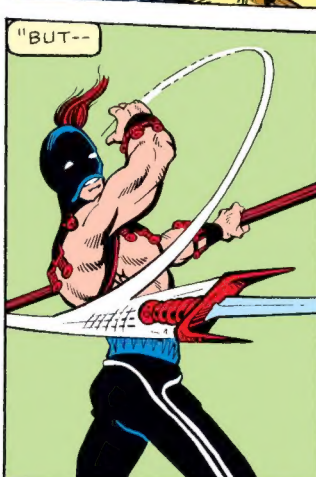
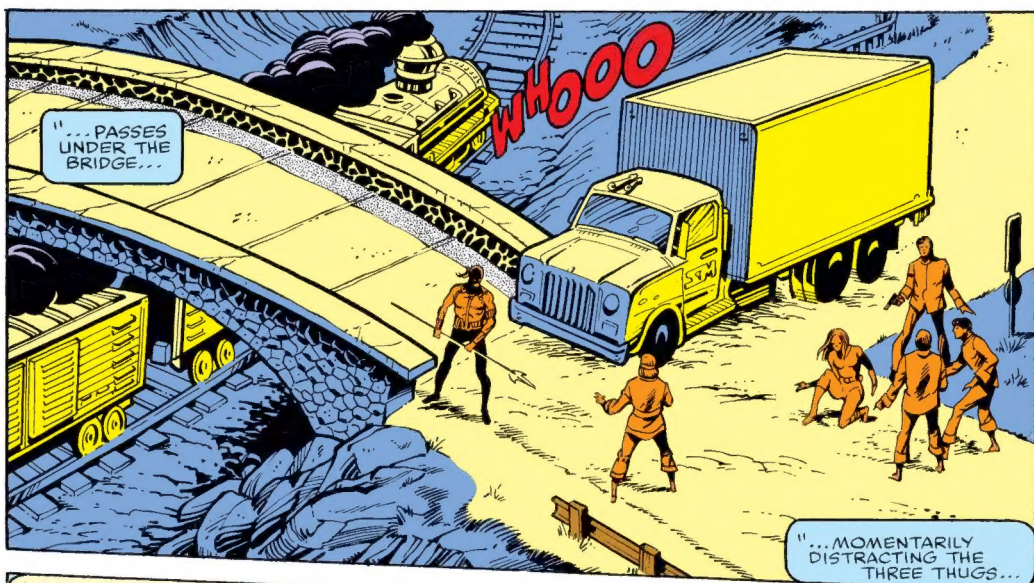
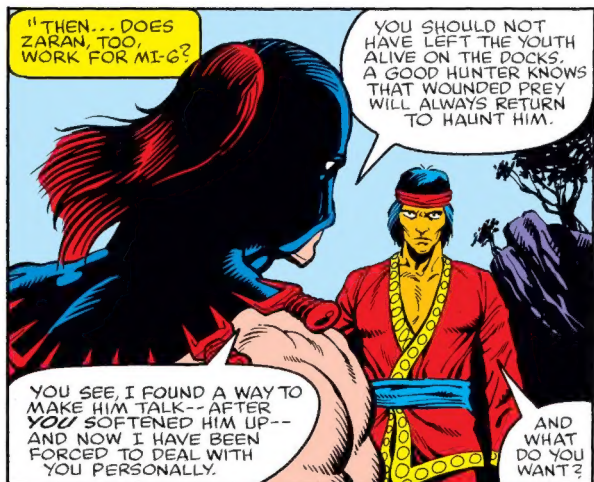
ME? OH, I AM MERELY A HUNTER... A TRAPPER... A FISHERMAN... AND A MASTER IN THE ART OF HANDLING WEAPONS.

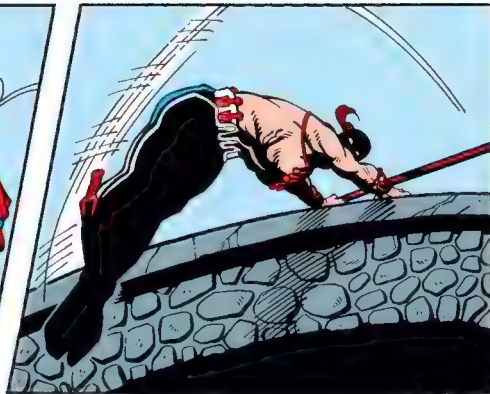
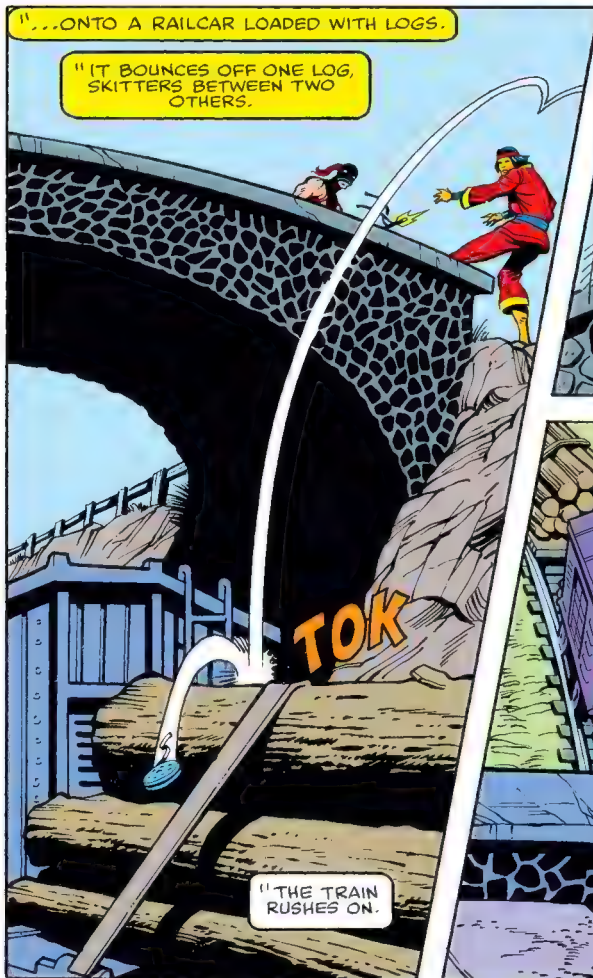
I AM ZARAN.

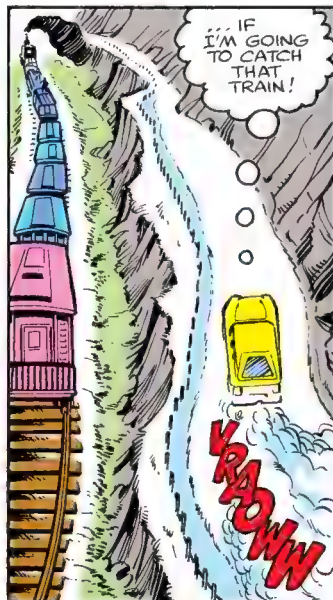
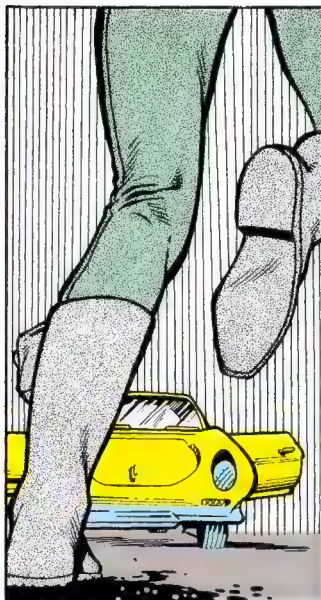
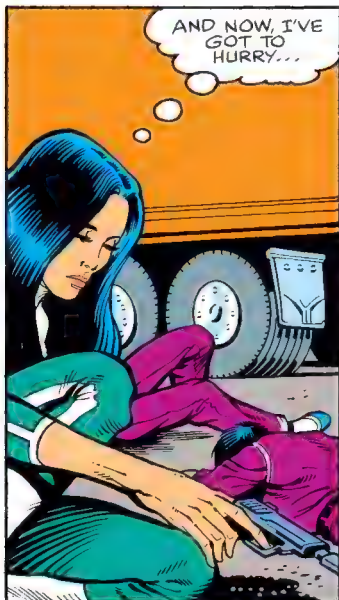


"ZARAN-- THE ONE WHO OFFERED MONEY FOR MY CAPTURE..."







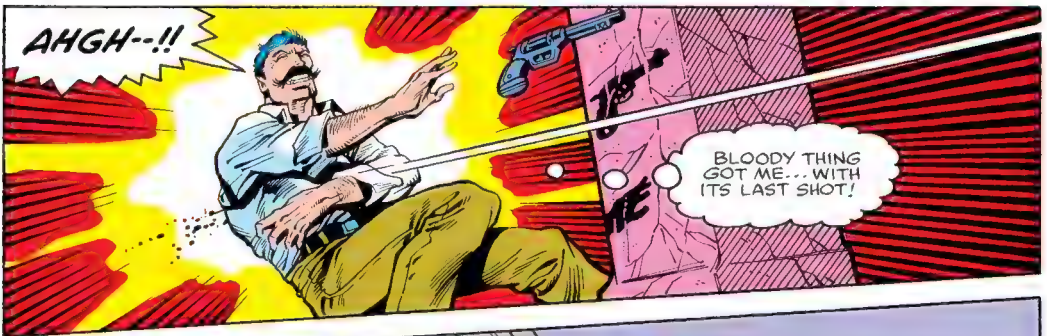


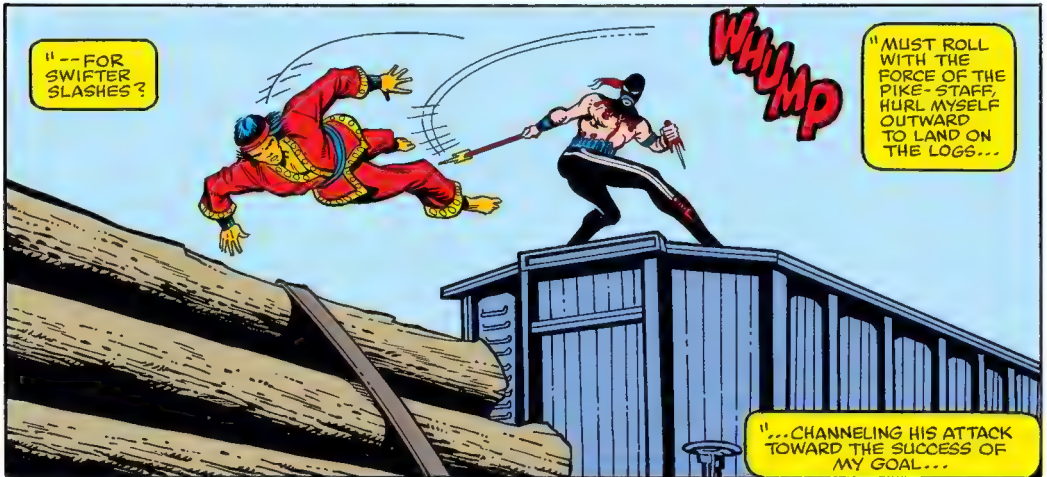
"I WAS RIGHT."

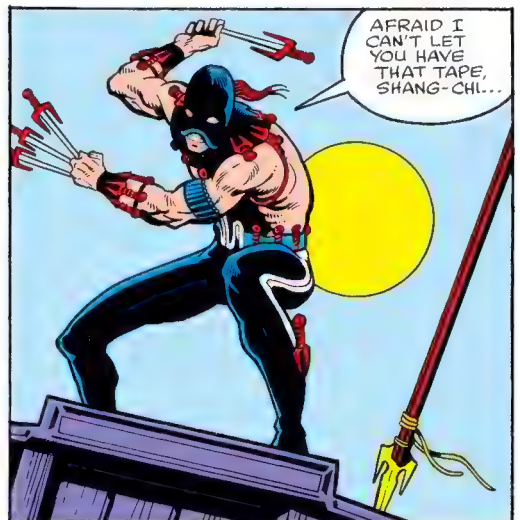
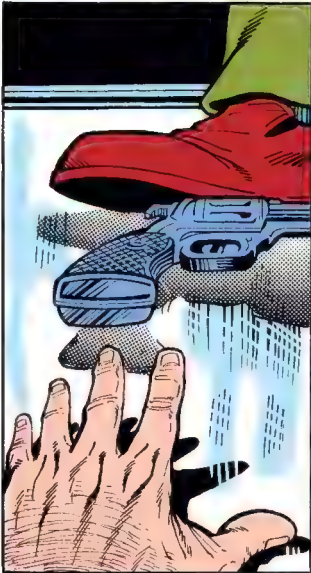
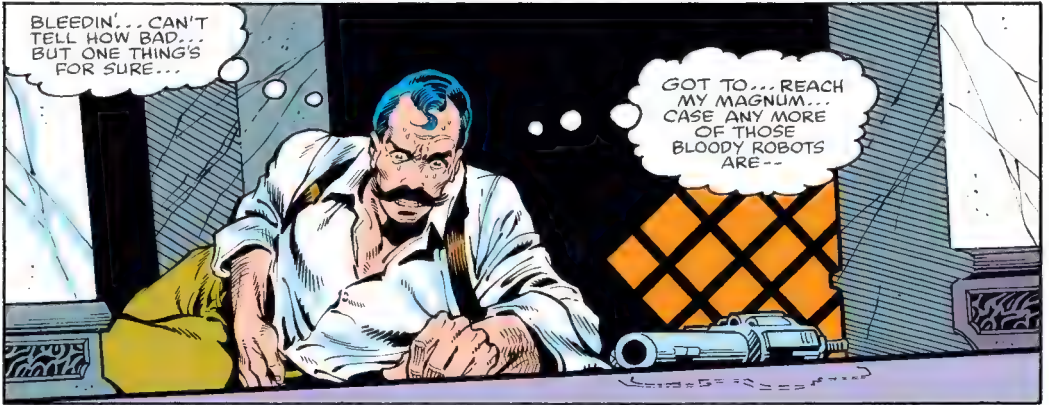


"I WILL FACE A NEW FOE THIS DAY."











AH! THE GOOSE IS STILL WARM. YOU SHOULD TRY IT.

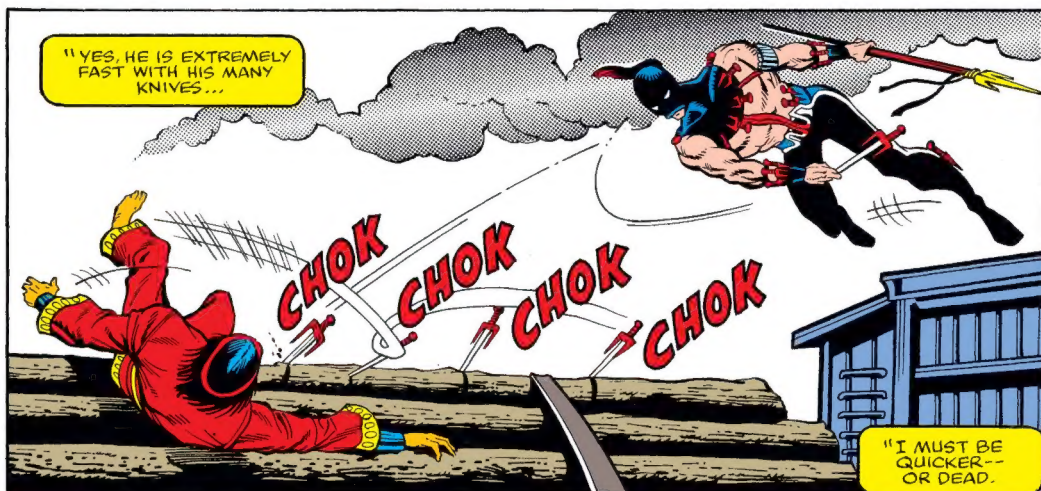
NOW THEN, WE LAST MET WHEN I OUTFITTED YOU FOR THE FU MANCHU FORAY INTO THE ARCTIC. AND SO, WE COME FULL CIRCLE.

YOU SEE, TARR, WE BELIEVE FU MANCHU MAY STILL BE ALIVE AND ACTIVE AGAIN.



AND IF SO, WE ARE PREPARED TO KILL ALL FOUR OF YOU -- AS WELL AS THE WU GIRL AND FU MANCHU'S SON, OF COURSE.

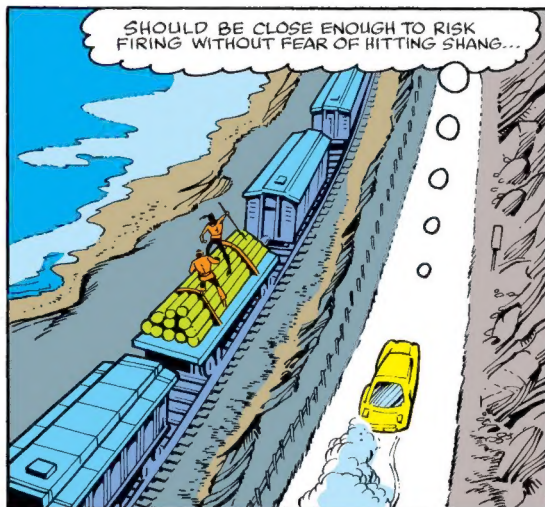
MM. QUITE TASTY.



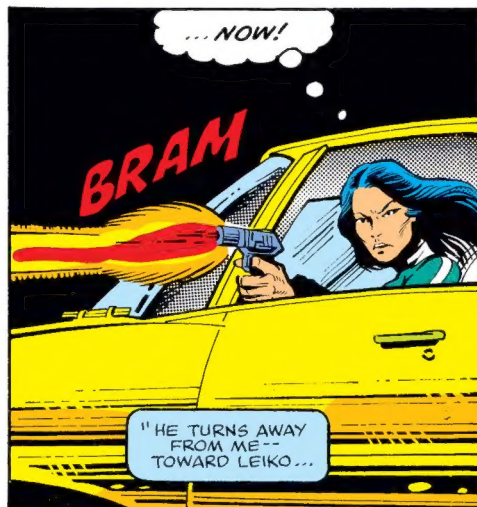
"YES, HE IS EXTREMELY FAST WITH HIS MANY KNIVES..."

CHOK CHOK CHOK CHOK

"I MUST BE QUICKER-- OR DEAD."



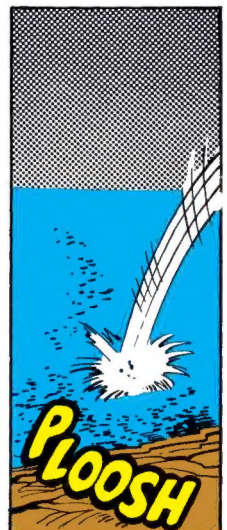
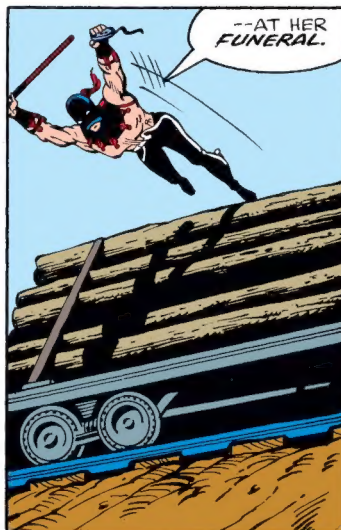
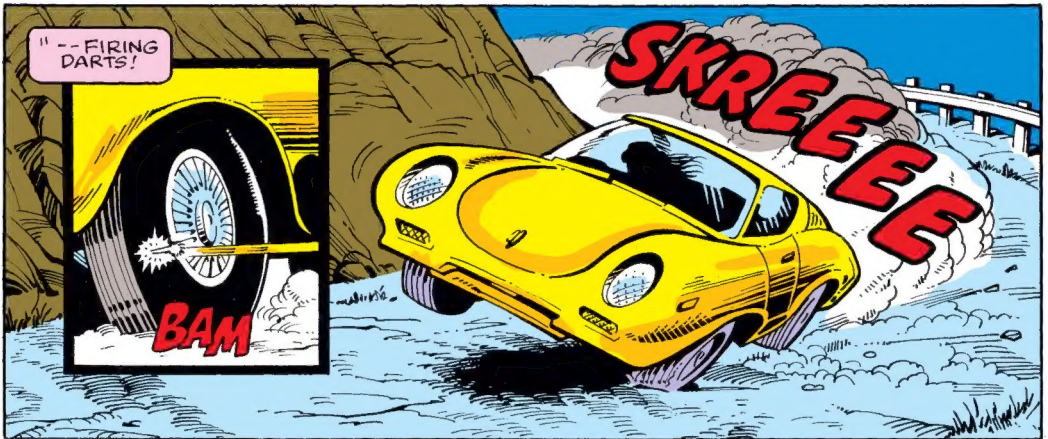
SHOULD BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO RISK FIRING WITHOUT FEAR OF HITTING SHANG...

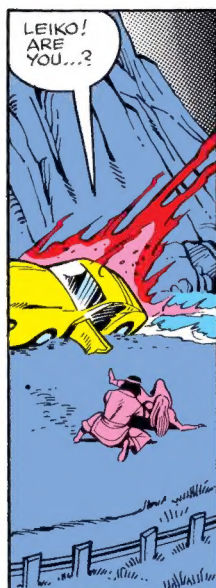
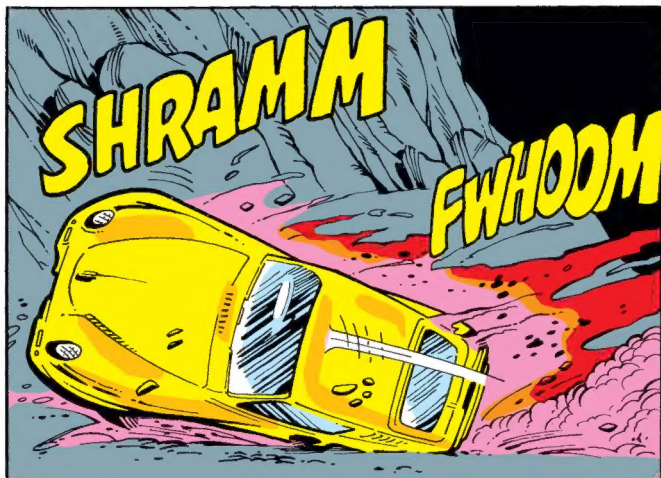


... NOW!

BRAM

"HE TURNS AWAY FROM ME -- TOWARD LEIKO..."





NEXT: WITH COLD RAGE IN HIS EYES AND VENGEANCE BURNING IN HIS HEART, SHANG-CHI STALKS THE STALKER, IN-- **TREAD THE NIGHT SOFTLY**

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

ROGER STERN
EDITOR
JIM SALICRUP
ASSISTANT EDITOR

We're gonna forego our usual comments this time, there are just too many good letters and too few inches of column space as it is. . .

Sirs:

I used to read MOKF avidly, with dedication, in the same way I read Conan when he and Bêlit were first getting it together. The MOKF stories were always good, but when I would rave about the art. . .no one paid much attention, although they would concede, "Uh, yes, the artwork is good." Then Gulacy left, as I knew he had to ("Why is this man drawing for comics in the first place?" I would ask myself), and I became one of those MOKF partial drop-outs alluded to in Mark Willard's letter. Oh, I still bought the book, but I wouldn't pick it up until I'd gone through the other comics I buy, albeit long before I touched your noble competition.

However, having just worked through my pile of comics in the traditional way, I have come to "Nighttimes" in MOKF #71. I am extremely impressed. One of the things I've always liked about MOKF is its tendency to emphasize the feelings and moods of the characters, particularly Shang-Chi, while de-emphasizing mindless action (read violence if you wish). I realize that this might not sell comics, and that you must please a certain young male adolescent head-set (pardon the sexism), making #71 somewhat of a risk. But there are those of us out here who appreciate and enjoy such refreshing risks.

Finally, I very much like Mike Zeck's work (another transplanted Floridian. . .why do we ever leave?). Not that I want him to copy Gulacy's stuff, but I think it fair to say that there is a certain type of art which seems most appropriate to MASTER OF KUNG FU. Happily, and without copying, Mike seems to have captured that quality, particularly evident in the top three panels of page 21.

I'm going to have to rearrange the order of my reading again.

Cynthia Young
1900 Diana Lane
Champaign, IL

Dear Doug & Mike,

"Nighttimes" is a gem sporting perhaps the biggest surprise ever found in an action comic. Typically, the third page from the end of almost every such comic features the violent climax of an action-filled episode; here, you've given us two people watching a movie and eating dinner. And it works. Indeed, I'm surprised that this episode was found acceptable by whomever decides, but a change of pace like this—even with a long flashback—serves to deepen the characters in a series where they are already unusually strong. One evening on a sofa with a cat and a pizza adds more to a storyline which is as steady as this one than any amount of bloodletting possibly could. When our fantasy protagonists occasionally appear in a robe and a turtleneck, and go to the movies without being maniacally assaulted, they seem closer to everyday reality, strengthening the impact of their extraordinary abilities when they do appear. I hope the sublime success of this issue is not lost on action-oriented readers.

Bill Wu
3024 Woodland Hills Dr. 14
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Doug,

I want to thank you for a small but enjoyable part of MASTER OF KUNG FU—Cat. Most superheroes do not have pets, which is understandable, since pets are a responsibility. But one of the nice things about this comic is that you are never too busy with the plot or the action to let us know that

someone will be taking care of Cat while his friends are away. And this is understandable, too, since Shang-Chi is not the sort of person who would forget to provide for his feline companion. (Unlike a certain Falcon whose Figaro's fate remains unknown—poor cat probably starved to death long ago.)

I also like the way you've allowed Cat to retain his dignity; thank heaven you never turned him into a lousy piece of "comedy relief." And so, I hope Cat will continue to grace the pages of this comic for a long, long time. He's just one of the little touches that elevated this comic above the other kung fu take-offs and have since allowed it to survive the passing fad.

P.S. to Mike Zeck: Your art has improved considerably. Congratulations.

Ann Nichols
4864 Sioux Ave.
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

Doug and Mike:

I've noticed (with glee) that a lot of the older villains from the pages of MOKF have been popping up recently. Fu Manchu and Fah Lo Suee aren't likely to show themselves again for a while, I suppose, but practically everyone else has. First Tiger-Claw and his Si-Fan Warriors; then robotic reminders of Pavane, Shadow-Stalker, Razor-Fist, Shockwave, and Shaka Kharn; then the real Pavane and Shen Kuei; and now the real Shockwave and. . .Brynocki! (I can't wait to see Mordillo's redecorated island and the amusing new games awaiting there.)

I love your villains, Doug, one and all. Comics have never seen psychotic antagonists to equal Velcro, Mordillo, War-Yore. . .and even Maximus the Mad was never portrayed better than in your INHUMANS strip. And your kung fu baddies are truly amazing to behold, with all sorts of clubs, chains, spikes—you name it—attached to arms, legs, hair, here, there and everywhere. On the surface they're impossible, and yet they come off deadly serious. Kogar was my favorite, being the ultimate in this category; he even came with interchangeable parts.

In closing, I'm glad you're giving these wonderful anti-socials and hardware freaks their quota of return appearances, Doug. Never stop. And keep churning out new ones too. Any book that can feature a character like Rufus T. Hackstaber with any credibility is a book in which anything can happen. I wouldn't want it any other way.

Meredith Robbins
230 Venado Ave.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Dear Doug, Mike, and Bruce,

Brynocki! The last time I saw Brynocki was on the occasion of Mordillo's death; it was also the first time I saw the little fellow. So you can imagine my delight at his return; it impressed me *almost* as much as the other developments in this current storyline, and that's something. Following a multi-part MOKF story is not always easy, but it is constantly rewarding. I became a regular reader shortly before the "Red Seas" saga. (M.E. Robbins told me what I was missing, in no uncertain terms.) At first, I had a devil of a time following all the intricate plot maneuvers, and did not fully appreciate the beauty of the story until I could reread it all in one sitting. But now that I'm familiar with all the characters and their situations, I'm following the current storylines with much more ease, and I can actually anticipate some events. It's a masterpiece, this book. Be proud of yourselves.

Kurt Busiek
Box 88—Lawrinson 303 Stadium Pl.
Syracuse, NY 13210

Thanks, People. Next issue we'll probably return to some mouth-shooting of our own. Till then, be good!